

**MINUTES OF THE
MINORITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE**

Wednesday, October 8, 2003 – 9:00 a.m. – Room 403 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. James Evans, Chair
Rep. Chad E. Bennion
Rep. David L. Hogue
Rep. Eric K. Hutchings
Rep. Roz McGee

Staff Present:

Mr. Jerry D. Howe, Policy Analyst
Ms. Esther D. Chelsea-McCarty, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Cassandra N. Bauman, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present and a copy of materials can be found at www.le.utah.gov or by contacting the committee secretary at 538-1032.

1. Committee Business

Chair Evans called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

MOTION: Rep. Bennion moved to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2003 meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Rep. McGee absent for the vote.

2. Public Comment Regarding Effectiveness of the Minority Affairs Policy of the State of Utah

Ms. Sherrie Hayashi, Antidiscrimination and Labor Division, indicated that the Division investigates employment, housing, and wage claim discrimination in communities. She indicated that the Division is understaffed for its caseloads. She responded to questions.

Mr. Forrest Cuch, Director, Utah Division of Indian Affairs, distributed "Utah Division of Indian Affairs Overview." He explained that the Division's goals for assisting American Indian tribes in Utah. He indicated that the Division annually reports to the Native American Legislative Liaison Committee.

Mr. Ed McConkie, Executive Director, CCJJ (Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice), indicated that money is granted to CCJJ and other commissions which is then granted to communities for crime fighting and crime preventing plans and efforts. He explained that CCJJ works with a number of ethnic and minority groups through these grants. He responded to questions.

Mr. Robert Flowers, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety, explained that the Department is looking into the possible profiling in Utah. He indicated that the Department is in the process of translating pamphlets into several languages. He responded to questions. Chair Evans requested that Commissioner Flowers submit the Department's strategic plan to the subcommittee.

Mr. Scott Carver, Deputy Director, Department of Corrections, indicated that the Department coordinates with the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness and employs an ethnic minority counselor. He stated that resources are limited and illegal immigrants do not have access to all available resources for that reason. He stated that the education provided in correctional facilities is provided by the State Office of Education. He responded to questions.

Ms. Sarah Brenna, Department of Workforce Services, distributed "Food Stamps Because Everyone Needs to Eat." She explained that the Department has organized a group to study needs in the communities which has assisted in finding areas for improvement to assist traditionally under-served communities. She explained how the Department has been working on overcoming language barriers in the communities. She responded to questions.

Ms. Yvette Diaz, former chair, Hispanic Advisory Council, stated that the people in the community often misunderstand the purpose of the Council, indicating that the Council is not a policy making or advocacy group. She stated there needs to be a more unified effort in serving the community. She responded to questions.

Ms. Marie Christman, Deputy Director, Department of Human Services, distributed and reviewed testimony regarding efforts the Department is making to better serve minority communities. She responded to questions.

Ms. Iona Thraen, Division Director, Health Systems Improvement, Utah Department of Health, distributed and reviewed "Utah Department of Health – Ethnic health issues." She responded to questions.

Mr. Richard J. Bradford, Deputy Director, DCED (Department of Community and Economic Development), distributed and reviewed information regarding efforts the Department is making to better serve traditionally under-served communities.

Mr. Richard Walker, Senior Program Manager, Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund, explained efforts being made to assist minority communities in finding affordable housing. He indicated that local elected officials need to sponsor programs within their communities to assist in serving minority communities and that the DCED educate those elected officials about programs so that those officials would be willing to sponsor the programs. Chair Evans asked Mr. Walker to submit written materials regarding how DCED can accomplish those goals.

Ms. Leticia Medina, Director, State Community Services, DCED, explained the programs which the Office administers to help meet the needs of individuals in these communities. She indicated that the Office is in the process of building a Homeless Assistance Information System which will track from where individuals came into the process and where they are at each step of the process. She responded to questions.

Mr. William Afeaki, Director, Office of Pacific Islander Affairs; Ms. Bonnie Dew, Director, Office of Black Affairs; Mr. Tony Yapias, Director, Office of Hispanic Affairs; and Ms. Edith Mitko, Director, Office of Asian Affairs; distributed and reviewed "2003-2004 Joint Ethnic Work Plan for the State of Utah Offices of Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander Affairs." They indicated that their offices consist of the director and a secretary. They expressed concern for the lack of staff. They also expressed concern for gathering accurate information including obtaining dropout rates in schools. They responded to questions.

Ms. Luz Robles, Hispanic Advisory Council, indicated that state agencies need to be educated in Title 6 of the federal regulations concerning translation of publications. She indicated that state agencies need some accountability and policies which can be enforced.

Mr. Ron Stallworth, Vice Chair, Black Advisory Council, indicated that the ethnic offices need to become more involved in issues which is difficult given their current capacity. He stated that it is imperative that the ethnic offices and advisory councils be created in statute.

Mr. Nadeem Ahmed, Vice Chair, Asian Advisory Council; Chair, Board of Trustees, The Islamic Society of Greater Salt Lake, explained the difficulties with discrimination and profiling in the state. He related experiences since September 11, 2001.

Dr. Kuang Yu Lee, Chair, Asian Advisory Council, explained that the minority community has become a very valuable workforce and that it is important that the state put more effort and funding into serving these communities.

Rep. Hutchings suggested that the Subcommittee review making an official ongoing committee to provide reviews of the progress which agencies are making in providing services to the minority communities.

3. Other Items / Adjourn

Chair Evans adjourned the meeting at 12:36 p.m.